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Attachment A to EGFA-20216

SUBJECT: Distribution of "The Fatherland" into Poland and the BSSR and its Influence.

30 Jan 58

A. BYELORUSSIANS in Poland:

1. The close of World War II found a large number of Byelorussians within the confines of Poland. The Byelorussians make up the largest nationality minority group in Poland at the present time. This minority group is the only one of its kind in Poland. A large number of these Byelorussians live in a compact mass within its own ethnographical territory in the Bialostok voyevodstvo of Poland. According to surveys, which are based on indisputable facts, a total of approximately 630,000 Byelorussians live in this area. Because a considerable number of them are Roman Catholics, they have been permitted to remain in their former ethnographically Byelorussian lands and have been incorporated into the ranks of Polish nationals.

2. Almost 300,000 Byelorussian nationals are presently making their homes in the former German territories of Silesia and Pomerania. These Byelorussians came to find themselves in these German territories in accordance with the so-called repatriation of "Poles" from western Byelorussia when this area was assimilated by the USSR from Poland at the end of World War II and the resettlement of those "Poles" from western Byelorussia who had been imprisoned in the USSR in 1939-40 with the Soviet occupation of western Byelorussia. Moreover, among these Byelorussians on the German territories are many young Byelorussians who had participated in various Byelorussian national anti-Soviet movements and had been members of anti-Soviet military units. They did not succeed in making their way to the West at the end of the war and were therefore obliged to remain in Poland where it was considerably easier for them to conceal their former anti-Soviet and anti-Communist backgrounds. Despite the fact that they later registered as "Poles", they remain reliable and unswerving Byelorussians who are wholly nationalistic anti-Communists.

3. On these former German territories one frequently encounters complete villages which, according to statements of recent visitors there, are exclusively settled by Byelorussians. In these villages one seldom hears a single word in Polish. There are also large numbers of Byelorussians in the towns and cities. According to the accounts of a Byelorussian, who after the conclusion of World War II remained as a partisan in the Bialostok voyevodstvo and later in the late 1940's made his way out to West Germany, he had met, while enroute to Stettin, a group of his friends who had served as partisans with him earlier but had succeeded in establishing themselves in the fire fighting unit of a town in Western Poland.

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4. Similarly, there are approximately 130,000 Byelorussians in Prussia. These made their way to Prussia generally in the same manner as the others did to the other areas of Poland.

B. OFFICIAL POLISH ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BYELORUSSIANS:

5. Until 1956 the Polish Communist government was completely intolerant in its relations toward nationality minorities in Poland. The Polish government considered Poland to be a one-nationality state. Despite this the government could not totally ignore the Byelorussian ethnographical group and in 1952 summoned the Byelorussian, (fnu) SAROKA, to the Polish Sejm to act as the representative for the Byelorussian population in Poland.

6. In early 1956 the Polish Communist Party initiated a new course in its relations vis-a-vis the minority nationalities. Exploiting this more liberal policy of the government, the Byelorussians in Poland called an organizational conference together in Bialostok in February 1956 during the course of which was organized the "Byelorussian Social-Cultural Society--Byelorusskoye Obshchestvenno-Kulturnoye Obshchestvo". The weekly newspaper, "Niwa", was established as its organ. Cultural activities among the Byelorussian population was initiated; these began to develop successfully. However, because of the existing internal political repressions, there could be no talk at this time of establishing contact with the Byelorussian emigration outside of Poland (in the West).

7. The results of the October 1956 events offered such an opportunity for contact with the West. The initiative for such contact was undertaken by the "Fatherland". In the latter part of 1956, the "Fatherland" editorial collegium forwarded a letter, prepared in a strictly official tone in order not to expose the members of the Society to any danger, suggesting that the two organizations exchange their respective publications. Within a short period of time, the "Fatherland" editorial collegium received a long letter in reply which was written in an unusually friendly tone. The letter from the Society indicated that the Byelorussians in Bialostok warmly welcomed the "Fatherland's" proposal. The "Fatherland" has been forwarded regularly to the administrative head of the "Niwa" since then.

C. RESULTS OF THE "FATHERLAND" DISTRIBUTION WITHIN POLAND:

8. Very shortly after the "Fatherland" began to be distributed to Poland, it became very clear that the "Fatherland" was being read not only by members of the Society or the Society officials alone but by residents from Bialostok and from other areas outside of Bialostok. The "Fatherland" began to receive letters from all corners of the Bialostok oblast and from other distant areas of Poland. We should also examine the influence of the "Fatherland" and the books printed by the "Fatherland" upon the editorial

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staff of the "Niwa".

9. Shortly after the exchange began between the "Fatherland" and the "Niwa", a column appeared in the "Niwa" which was entitled, "Life in the Emigration", in which appeared articles based on information published in the "Fatherland" concerning various cultural and social activities undertaken by the Byelorussian emigres in the various western countries. Even complete works and poems of emigre authors were published in toto by the "Niwa"; understandably the items published were carefully selected in order that this would not offend the Polish authorities. Even under these restricted conditions, a considerable portion of the Byelorussians in Poland learned about the existence of an organized Byelorussian emigration in the West.

10. However, even this form of relatively harmless activity was not to the liking of the Polish authorities as was evidenced by the fact that the "Niwa" was soon reprimanded for its action in reproducing compositions authored by Byelorussian emigres. In one of the editions of the "Niwa", therefore, appeared an article which was entitled, "To the editors of the Fatherland". In this article the author accused the "Fatherland" of being subjective in reporting world affairs and of doing a poor job in actually reporting more fully on the life of emigres in the West. The "Fatherland" prepared a response to the "Niwa" attack; this response was carefully worded in order that the "Niwa" not suffer further abuses at the hands of the Polish authorities. Although a very abusive article appeared in the "Niwa" in answer to this, the "Niwa" reprinted virtually verbatim major portions of the "Fatherland's" reply--a reply in which were cited the reasons which motivated the Byelorussian emigres to flee their homeland to the West. In other words it became obvious that the "Niwa" attempted to placate the Polish authorities while simultaneously trying to disseminate to its readers various statements and thoughts from the West.

11. The column, "Life in the Emigration", disappeared from the "NIWA" but the influence of the "Fatherland" was evident in various other articles which made their appearance in the "Niwa". It should be noted here that the "Fatherland" distributed to the "Niwa", and to other individuals in Poland, the various books and other publications which had been printed by the "Fatherland". Recently the "Niwa" asked that additional copies of these books be forwarded to the "Niwa". For example, in a "Niwa" article entitled, "Several Words re Editorial Topics", the author affirms that the "Niwa" intends to include in its editorial works various compositions authored by Maksim GARETSKIY, K. KAGANTSA, Alesya GARUNA, Vladislava GALUBKA, Yasep PUSHCHY, Vl. DUBOVKI and many others who are on the forbidden list in the BSSR and whose works have been destroyed as "bourgeoisie" propaganda authored by "nationalists"; the author underscores that this will be done despite formal opposition on the part of the authorities (Polish).

12. It is interesting to note the editorial comments in an article entitled, "Who are we and what do we want?" In this article is pointed out

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the fact that various individuals in Poland consider the Byelorussians in Poland to be "nationalists". From this article is cited the following excerpt: "Not less humorously have various responsible officials in the BSSR tagged us as 'bourgeoisie nationalists'. More sober thoughts have been expressed by the present genuine nationalists in Munich. According to them, we are Communists period."

D. SOME STATEMENTS MADE BY THE RECIPIENTS OF THE "FATHERLAND" IN POLAND:

13. The following are excerpts from letters received by the "Fatherland" from its readers in Poland:

a) "Be so kind as to forward the "Fatherland" to my personal address. You should have no reason to fear for my political reliability. I am forwarding to you an article which you might wish to publish. It is impossible to have truthful articles printed in the "Niwa". In the event that you are interested in anything, you simply need ask. I will try to answer all your queries. I have no fear . . . ." Written by the chairman of the Historical Section of the Byelorussian Social-Cultural Society.

b) "Please forward the "Fatherland" to me; I wait impatiently to receive it each time. The magister of the Society is of the same opinion as I am concerning your newspaper. In discussions with our compatriots we take pride that your newspaper exists....."

c) "Write to us. We are very anxious to work with the emigration ...." A Personal letter written by a Society member.

d) "I saw your newspaper accidentally". Heretofore I never had occasion to see any emigre newspaper. Mail to me at least several editions. I am very interested in receiving it...." Written by/a peasant from the village of Kryunki which is located a considerable distance from Bialostok.

e) "Dear friends! Your almanac, "Iya Chuzhikh Beragov", is magnificent." Anonymous letter from central Poland.

f) "It is now more than ten years since I last saw and read the genuine Byelorussian language and since I last heard honest Byelorussian thoughts expressed. Only with great difficulty did I acquire your newspaper which I read with great joy. Please send it at any cost to me. I will attempt in some way to reimburse you. I have written a lengthy novel describing life in a Soviet prison. Could you not make an attempt to have this published in the "Fatherland"?..."

14. Many other examples of the aforementioned nature could be cited if this were necessary. These letters speak for themselves. From the various letters received from the readers in Poland, there are definite indications that the "Fatherland" is playing an important role among the Byelorussians

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in Poland. Although only a relatively small number of copies are being distributed to Poland, there are indications from these letters that the "Fatherland" is being read by many hundreds of others who distribute the newspaper from hand to hand.

E. SITUATION IN THE BSSR:

15. Over 50 copies of the "Fatherland" are forwarded to the BSSR. Most of these are forwarded to various official editorial establishments as an official answer to the Soviet attack upon the Byelorussian emigration. There is no indication to date that any or all of these papers are reaching their destinations. However, it is significant to note that the Minsk cultural newspaper, "Literature and Art", with the inception of the distribution of the "Fatherland" in the BSSR, began to publish articles concerning various emigre authors. The articles, of course, are abusive of the emigre works. Despite this, the articles identify the identities of the various emigres in the West. It is generally considered that even such abusive articles are desirable inasmuch as the Byelorussian population is thereby granted an opportunity to realize that the various Byelorussian emigres, especially the authors who were popular in BSSR prior to their trek to the West, continue to engage in activities harmful to the Soviet cause.

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